Chemical toilets in trains

525. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering the need to put in place basic infrastructure including clean toilets and safe waste disposal;

(b) whether Government are also considering to use sophisticated techology to provide for installation of chemical toilets in trains and build adequate toilet;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, what steps Government contemplate to check the spread of diseases and breed germs which can contaiminate food served on stations and trains due to excreta on tracks and non-disposal of waste?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Indian Railways are in the process of developing/procuring environment friendly toilets for passenger coaches. Besides efforts to develop such toilets in the country, action is also in hand to procure small quantities of Biological Toilets and Vacuum Toilets for field experience before resorting to bulk fitment.

(d) Does not arise.

Unhygienic food served in trains

526. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there are complaints that food provided in the trains is unhygienic;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that government are thinking to take help of branded private food companies; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Out of 1826 complaints received during 2006-07 (upto December), 128 complaints are regarding unhygienic food served in trains. Action like counseling, warning, fine and termination of contract have been taken on the complaints found substantiated.

(c) and (d) Reputed caterers and private companies in catering/hospitality business, are invited to participate in the bidding process for award of contract for comprehensive on board catering services.

Pending rail projects

†527. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that rail projects worth thousand of crore rupees have been pending with his Ministry for years together;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that his Ministry has constituted a high-power Committee to review these projects;

(c) if so, the names of the projects lying pending over past several years; and

(d) by when these projects would be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Railways have a huge throwforward of projects requiring over Rs. 54,000 crore for completion. The funds are limited and projects are being progressed as per the availability of resources keeping in view the operational requirements and other considerations.

(b) Yes, Sir. An Empowered Committee has been constituted to review progress of works costing more than Rs. 100 crore.

(c) The names of the ongoing projects is given in the Budget Documents.

(d) It is not feasible to give definite time schedule for completion of ongoing projects. However, a number of initiatives have been taken to generate non-budgetary resources through cost sharing with States, Public-Private Partnership, Defence Funds and National projects to expedite completion of these projects.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.